

## SNAPSHOT OF BENEFITS PAID IN IDAHO'S UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

September 30 each year marks the end of the federal fiscal year—the 12-month budget and accounting period—that pertains to most federal agencies and programs. The federal fiscal year is also an important period for Idaho's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program as the state's basic UI administrative system must coincide with the federal program. This is also an opportune time to summarize some aspects of UI benefit payments made during this period.

The Federal-State Unemployment Compensation (or Insurance) Program was established as Title III of the Social Security Act of 1935 as a means to pay a monetary sum or benefit to unemployed workers. Title IX of the act established a tax on employers to finance the UI program and established a trust fund in which the taxes paid through a federal-state cooperative program would be held for benefit payments. Not every unemployed person was eligible for benefits nor every employer taxed, but the basic notion of paying some money to help a productive worker through a period of involuntary unemployment still exists.

Besides providing some financial assistance to unemployed workers, there are several other positive attributes usually associated with UI payments. The money paid to the unemployed person probably is quickly spent, thereby contributing to the local community's economic stability. Idaho has many small communities with relative high percentages of UI claimants along with persistently high unemployment rates. The flow of funds into these towns is very helpful. Additionally, the usual requirement that the claimant be available for and seeking work maintains an attachment to the local labor force, or maintains a labor pool available to meet the local demand for labor.

Labor market analysts use UI claims data to provide additional information about local economic conditions and trends. UI claims information compiled by industry can be used to validate trends spotted in the *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* data. Claims data is a major component of the model used to estimate unemployment rates in specific areas. Many initial claims submitted in the same time period can signal a mass layoff or plant closure. In addition, economic developers often use claimant numbers and characteristics to estimate an available labor supply.

There were two primary UI programs administered in Idaho during FY03. The regular UI program paid out

\$187,628,605 during FY03. This includes residents of other states filing a claim against an Idaho employer. A second program, *Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation* (TEUC) was initiated by Congress in March 2001. It has been renewed twice by congressional action and remained active at the end of FY2003. TEUC provides additional weeks of benefit eligibility to people who had exhausted their regular benefit amount. TEUC is a federally funded program. It paid out \$31,358,799 in benefits in FY03.

For FY03 (until September 30, 2003), the following are the parameters of the Idaho UI program that were in effect:

- **Minimum weekly benefit amount:**  
10/01/02 – 9/30/03 - \$51.00
- **Maximum weekly benefit amount:**  
10/01/02 – 6/30/03 - \$316.00  
7/01/03 -- 9/30/03 - \$320.00
- **Minimum weeks of benefits, regular program:**  
10 weeks
- **Maximum weeks of benefits, regular program:**  
26 weeks
- **TEUC weeks of benefits: one-half of regular program eligibility**

The weekly benefit amount and number of weeks of benefit eligibility can vary for each claimant depending upon each claimant's work and wage history.

FYI Table 1 shows the common measurements of the UI benefits program for the last five federal fiscal years. FY03 established new highs in the program magnitude dimensions. Idaho suffered through its economic slowdown throughout the fiscal year and there simply were more claimants. However, there was a decline from FY02 in the average weeks of individual claims and the average benefit amount. There is not any apparent explanation for this at this time.

FY Table 2 on page 22 shows the distribution of UI payments by county. The county indicates the claimant's residence, not necessarily the place where the claimant worked.

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FYI Table 1: Amount of UI Payments—All Entitlements—Total Idaho Instate

Fiscal Year	Number of Weeks Paid	Dollar Amount Paid	Individuals Receiving First Payment	Average Weeks Paid Per Individual	Average Weekly Benefit Amount
1999	529,960	\$97,736,895	44,932	11.79	\$184.42
2000	507,977	99,415,622	43,342	11.72	195.71
2001	610,282	127,757,865	51,160	11.93	209.34
2002	903,835	199,356,387	69,484	13.01	220.57
2003	934,767	205,955,268	74,923	12.48	220.33

FYI Table 2: Amount of UI Payments by County—All Entitlements—Federal Fiscal Year 2003

FIPS Code	County	Number of Weeks Paid	Dollar Amount Paid	Individuals Receiving First Payment	Average Weeks Paid Per Individual	Average Weekly Benefit Amount
1	Ada	220,135	\$52,681,089	16,038	\$13.73	239.31
3	Adams	6,181	1,389,967	483	12.80	224.88
5	Bannock	53,935	11,599,198	4,141	13.02	215.06
7	Bear Lake	2,895	675,489	239	12.11	233.33
9	Benewah	11,310	2,766,927	1,024	11.04	244.64
11	Bingham	24,559	5,095,806	2,356	10.42	207.49
13	Blaine	14,697	3,711,830	1,224	12.01	252.56
15	Boise	4,604	1,102,532	355	12.97	239.47
17	Bonner	35,374	7,546,523	2,909	12.16	213.34
19	Bonneville	36,177	8,254,220	3,066	11.80	228.16
21	Boundary	10,486	2,421,465	946	11.08	230.92
23	Butte	1,647	390,665	134	12.29	237.20
25	Camas	752	191,282	59	12.75	254.36
27	Canyon	139,171	29,691,949	11,160	12.47	213.35
29	Caribou	5,464	1,341,236	433	12.62	245.47
31	Cassia	18,140	3,431,635	1,463	12.40	189.18
33	Clark	430	101,328	44	9.77	235.65
35	Clearwater	9,758	2,301,314	799	12.21	235.84
37	Custer	3,359	752,570	270	12.44	224.05
39	Elmore	16,366	3,288,226	1,235	13.25	200.92
41	Franklin	2,035	417,752	178	11.43	205.28
43	Fremont	7,610	1,671,310	711	10.70	219.62
45	Gem	13,546	2,960,452	1,049	12.91	218.55
47	Gooding	7,217	1,492,458	578	12.49	206.80
49	Idaho	13,757	3,068,135	1,169	11.77	223.02
51	Jefferson	8,637	2,019,424	763	11.32	233.81
53	Jerome	10,600	2,203,039	870	12.18	207.83
55	Kootenai	84,566	18,019,487	6,787	12.46	213.08
57	Latah	12,578	2,978,774	1,026	12.26	236.82
59	Lemhi	7,157	1,460,730	570	12.56	204.10
61	Lewis	1,033	210,411	78	13.24	203.69
63	Lincoln	3,207	803,473	289	11.10	250.54
65	Madison	5,624	1,229,800	555	10.13	218.67
67	Minidoka	22,964	4,287,992	1,880	12.21	186.73
69	Nez Perce	19,087	4,105,997	1,564	12.20	215.12
71	Oneida	1,175	271,495	83	14.16	231.06
73	Owyhee	1,611	318,106	121	13.31	197.46
75	Payette	13,688	2,604,326	1,194	11.46	190.26
77	Power	6,675	1,377,868	654	10.21	206.42
79	Shoshone	16,983	3,670,627	1,425	11.92	216.14
81	Teton	1,844	444,521	169	10.91	241.06
83	Twin Falls	38,121	7,636,397	3,140	12.14	200.32
85	Valley	9,641	2,094,324	775	12.44	217.23
87	Washington	8,290	1,496,717	660	12.56	180.54
	Idaho Counties	933,086	\$205,578,866	74,666	12.50	220.32
	Unknown Counties	1,681	376,402	257	6.54	223.92
	Total Idaho	934,767	\$205,955,268	74,923	12.48	220.33
41045	Malheur Co., OR	3,599	674,617	349	10.31	187.45
53003	Asotin Co., WA	4,377	878,315	367	11.93	200.67
88888	Other Conti. Co.	9,807	2,268,412	792	12.38	231.31
99999	Interstate Liable	37,841	9,210,793	2,562	14.77	243.41
	Total Interstate	55,624	\$13,032,136	4,070	13.67	234.29
	Total Payments	990,391	\$218,987,404	78,993	12.54	221.11

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Bureau